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*156 858 to choose, even if in this case it was seemingly to his own detriment—he knows what is best for himself. Even the incompetent, helpless infant is an independent soul with his own will and right of determination, and his dignity must be respected.

858 828 It must be recognized of course that in the cosmology of Bang Chan the infant is anything but a conative *tabula rasa*. When he enters the world of human beings he brings with him not only a stock of individually accumulated merit (*bun*) and demerit (*baap*) from countless previous lives which will affect his being in this one, but also a host of other forces which predetermine his character: his *khwaan* (soul-stuff), *winjaan* (psycho-biological motive power), *caj* (heart), and *nidsaj* or *ʔupanidsaj* (ingrained [114] character), among others. (J. R. Hanks 1959 has a brilliant exposition of the role of these elements.) In a very real sense the infant enters the world of humans as a developed, or partially developed, psychological being. Human influences, particularly virtue and "good habits," can be inculcated into him, but they are ultimately limited by these pre-natally determined 861 characteristics. Much of Bang Chan child rearing is actually a series of 155 perpetual compromises between (a) parents surrendering to what they think are the child's predetermined traits (and while this represents an extraordinary respect for his infantile individuality, it also leads in a developmental sense to much of the solipsism to which we have been referring throughout); (b) parents trying to come to terms with, or overcome, his preordained characteristics by inculcating good habits through example, coaxing, and whipping (the three modes of socialization, in order of priority, although villagers are more prone to talk about whippings than actually give them; most are too tenderhearted, and the rare whipping is almost always the result of sudden rage); and (c) leaving the child to his own devices. The third differs from the first in that it focuses on the parent's concerns rather than the child's and indicates indifference rather than respect. Thus, in contrast to the illustration above, one constantly sees children, generally under eight years of age, "annoying" conversing adults (primarily by making noises, although not necessarily to get the latter's attention) to which the parent responds with continuous but intermittent "tsk, tsks." The adult never raises the volume of his admonition, never gets increasingly disturbed, and eventually gives up while the children continue on their merry, noise-making way. The parent's lack of genuine concern and compulsion is not lost upon the child. Although events of this type are not overly noticeable in Bang Chan—precisely because they occur in such an easygoing and unremarkable way—they do take place repeatedly, and represent one of the principal interactional themes of the parent-child relationship. Children learn quickly that although parents will go through little ritualistic forms of controlling them,

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the parents often do not really care and children can pretty much get away with doing what they want.[14]

With regard to other expressions of the recognition of individual dignity, one rarely sees in Bang Chan any physical or even verbal coercion. (The rare use of whipping, noted above, is to punish transgression, not to implement action.) Other than in horseplay, children do not push each other around; in my twenty-two months in Thailand, I saw not one case of young children in a serious fight, despite the fact that I looked for it. Very rare indeed is the parent who uses force or the threat of force on his child; there is no Siamese equivalent to the American intimidation, "You had better do that or else. . . ." In general, Bang Chaners proceed on the simple assumption that if people, including children, do not do what you ask them, they have good—and more important, private—reasons for responding that way; there is no need for, or interest in, self-justification. The major means of inducing recalcitrants to conform to your wishes is to cajole, wheedle, and flatter them (see particularly the responses to the Sentence Completion items, *"The best way to treat a subordinate is . . ."*; *"The worst way to treat a subordinate is . . ."* in chapter V). A less conscious but more frequently practiced alternative is simply to withdraw support: the parent who turns his back on the child and walks out (particularly evident in our TAT stories),[15] the older sibling who refuses to take his younger ones with him when there is entertainment to be seen, and the like. It must be noted, however, that social disengagement, although frequently utilized, does not always work; often the individual who is left suspended merely accepts the fact and continues about his business. The major point to be recognized is that villagers do not use forms of direct, blatant coercion on others. If soft words or the withdrawal of love will not move them, then their decision, freely determined, must be respected.

Love and affection within the family appear primarily in two forms. Their most typical expression is shown through the gifts, favors, and services people do for each other. The degree of affection that individuals feel toward one another is in fact explicitly measured in these terms. Thus, a father says that of all his daughters, the one who has given him the greatest pleasure is "the one who sells things . . . When she gets money,

[14] In qualification, however, it must be noted that all Bang Chaners are extremely sensitive to social cues—partially as a consequence of having to balance off their individualistic propensities against the demands of the authority system—and here the children ignore their parents only because the latter have indicated by their very halfheartedness that they do not care. The children can, and do, quickly hop to it on the slightest indication of parental seriousness: a stern look, for example. My point, however, is that such looks are comparatively rare.

[15] In another paper, Hanks and Hanks (1963) make the same observation on the basis of behavioral materials.

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harvest time, serve to create a rite of intensification as family members decide together what work will be done by whom, arise early in the morning to work together happily in the fields—sometimes for as long as fourteen hours at a stretch—and actually see the fruits of their coöperative labor mount up on the threshing floors. The sense of familial solidarity and intradependence, and its associated feelings of love, is experienced by all.[18] Also, since harvesting more often than not involves working reciprocally with other families, the host of a reciprocal labor group giving a feast whenever possible at the end of the day, it serves, although to a lesser extent, to intensify feelings of membership in the larger community.

Summary

In my discussion of the "cultural background," I have dwelt primarily on kinship because the family is functionally the most significant social unit in the village and because it is within the context of kinship that personality is developed and, in Bang Chan, most frequently expressed. None of this is meant to imply a lack of importance for other social units—the monastery, the school, the state—or for the non-institutionalized relationships—friends, drinking partners, and business contacts. However, kinship does provide the basic psychological model for all human relationships in Bang Chan,

[18] Although the annual cycle of Thai peasants is described in detail in the available ethnographies on Thai rural life (deYoung 1955, Fraser 1960, Kaufman 1960, Kingshill 1960, Sharp *et al.* 1953) a few words should be added about the psychological dimensions of this cycle. Thus familial solidarity, intradependence, and love are not the only sentiments that are heightened during the harvest period. Perhaps the most striking quality of this season (December to January) is the increase in the optimism, joy, and general psychic well-being of the villagers: people laugh more loudly than usual; they relish telling about the things they are going to buy; parents take more kindly to the gallivanting of the children. These months contrast with transplanting time (late July to early August) and the period prior to harvest (October to November), when an overabundance of rain can destroy the villagers' rice seedlings or their entire crop. These latter periods are marked not so much by anxiety as by a sense of watchful waiting. All these contrast with the Dry season when things are especially quiet in Bang Chan and when villagers spend their time repairing farming equipment and houses, gossiping, or are working on jobs outside the community. Villagers say that of the three major seasons of the year (Dry, February to June; Rainy, June to January; Cold, January to February) they like the Rainy season best. The season coincides with the rice-growing cycle, is marked by Buddhist Lent and, excepting a final week of Monsoon downpour, is in fact the most comfortable period of the year.

These seasonal activities and attitudes also have direct implications for field work. Thus, while villagers gave freely of their time during the dry season and after the harvest, and during the latter were especially outgoing and benign, many simply would not see me during the weeks of planting and harvesting. The benign attitudes of villagers interviewed after the harvest were reflected directly in the data, as were the noncommittal responses of some villagers who were interviewed during transplanting time.

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as do rejected lovers who fear suffering again. Without strong bonds, they develop no sense of guilt for those they injure and stand ultimately responsible only to themselves, individuals among individuals who differ mainly in the amount of influence they wield. Thus Dang [the informant] can make demands of others but feels little obligation toward them. As he left his father and uncle with scarcely a second thought, so others can leave him. Of course, as was indicated by Dang's projective test data, this form of individualism is not entirely without its psychic toll. But on the level of action and conscious decision, the moral for a Thai runs: invest not thy love in a shadow.

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The piece by this writer (Phillips, 1959) is essentially an amplification of some of the findings of the above paper and a confirmation, in the life histories of two other informants, of their typicality. The paper was confined to an examination of the development and expression of the needs for dependence and independence in the lives of these villagers. Three major points emerged from the analysis. First, the most common expression of dependence was in the area of subsistence and economics, in the individual's desire to attach himself to others who would give him sustenance in return for services rendered. Over and over again, the informants viewed their relationships with other people, particularly kin, in terms of the others' economic value to themselves. However, this mode of dependence was not so much an overriding compulsion as it was a basic postulate about human relationships: the measure of another person's love was explicitly the degree to which in material terms he served the self. The second point, in contrast to the above, was that marriage was seen as the means by which a person could free himself from the obligations of economic dependence. This freedom has two aspects: freedom from the frustrations caused by others; and freedom to set oneself up as master of one's own household, thus reaping the psychological satisfactions—status, power, and prestige—of having others dependent on oneself. The third and perhaps most striking point concerned the fact that all these informants spent their childhoods being shuttled from one family to another. Although this experience may not have been culturally modal, it occurred with sufficient frequency to be a possibility for every Bang Chan child. It was further suggested that in part such experiences taught villagers at a very early age that they had to fend for themselves, and that the experiences served as psychological prototypes for the sense of fragility of social relationships that is so characteristic of village life.

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In contrast to most of the literature cited above, the last two articles are based on data which are products of interviews heavily weighted toward the psychologically expressive. Two of the informants admitted that they told us things that they had never shared with anyone, and the agitation (a

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None of the above is meant to imply that 79 percent of the adults of Bang Chan would in fact give away their children. But the relatively high frequency of agreement they exhibited in admitting to such a possibility and the fact that as many as 65 percent agreed that it was either good or justifiable reveals something of the psychological environment within which the Bang Chan child is reared and where he learns his basic orientations toward other persons. The responses to this single stimulus must of course be seen in the context of the more naturalistic, behavioral materials presented earlier. The point of all these illustrations, however, is that they indicate there is nothing sacrosanct about any human tie in Bang Chan, even that which exists between parent and child. If necessity or personal predilection requires, then this tie too may be broken. What is perhaps most significant here, from a developmental point of view, is that the breaking of the tie always exists as a realistic potentiality in the life of the child. Reared in an environment where he learns that no human tie need be permanent or sustaining, the developing child inevitably takes on some of these same patterns of expectation in his own dealings with others. Thus the villager who abandons his spouse or the employee who with little warning leaves his employer are acting in terms of patterns the prototypes of which they either actually experienced as children or came to expect as part of the realities of interpersonal relations in Bang Chan.

The second major source of the villagers' loose relationships lacks the developmental reference of the above. To a certain extent it is not even social relational in nature, although our concern with it stems from its having crucial consequences to the social orientations of individuals. I am referring here to the Buddhist emphasis on the primacy of individual action and individual responsibility. Without going into a lengthy discussion of the subtleties of Buddhist doctrine, it is imperative to point out that the principal tenet of Hinayana Buddhism is the complete psychological freedom, isolation, and responsibility of every person. This is not the Occidental idea of "free will," but rather the notion that every person is a free agent, responsible only to and for himself, and that he inevitably reaps the fruits of his own conduct. Buddhist canonical literature is replete with references stressing the centrality of this doctrine. The last words of the Lord Buddha before he left this world to achieve the sublime state of *nibphaan* (nirvana) are said to have been: "Work out your own salvation with diligence." A frequently quoted passage of the *Dhammapada* reads: "By oneself is evil done; By oneself one suffers; By oneself evil is left undone; By oneself one is purified." The whole complex cosmology relating to the accumulation of merit and demerit is phrased in terms of the individual's lonely journey through cycles of interminable existences working out his own moral destiny. Who his progenitors were, what kind of environment he was born